

cies of rats (Table 1) found at Bhandup are not represented at Goregaon-Malad.

The studies are being continued and the detailed results would be soon published.

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#### 6. THE INDIAN MOORHEN (*GALLINULA CHLOROPUS*) BREEDING IN KERALA

Sálim Ali says in the BIRDS OF KERALA that the breeding of the Indian Moorhen has not been recorded in Kerala. M. C. A. Jackson, too, does not seem to have found it breeding. In April 1974 two Zoologists and I watched Moorhens with chicks at Munnar, the High Ranges, Kerala State.

On 7-iv-1974 Sri S. Satheesh Chandran Nair, Research Scholar in Zoology, Kerala University, and I were watching birds near the Ramaswami Iyer Head Works of the Kerala Electricity Board. At 17.30 hrs, in the stagnant waters of the stream above the spillway, we found an Indian Moorhen with two tiny, jet black chicks. While the parent swam about near the thick growth of reeds on the Park-side bank, the young ones walked about on the floating mat of dead and broken reeds at the edge of the reed-bed. The young could swim, though they did so only when they had to cross a gap in the mat of reeds. Half an hour later in a different part of the pool we came across the same or another pair of Moorhens with two chicks of the same age and colour as the first.

On the 14th we were again at the same spot at 1745 with Sri V. S. Vijayan, Research Scholar working under Dr. Sálim Ali, and we saw a single pair of Moorhens only. They had two chicks with them, but these were more than double the size of those seen a week earlier. Moreover these had the throat and the underparts whitish. The fact that no other pair of Moorhens could be found on the 14th makes me wonder whether there were, after all, only this one pair in the area. If that sus-

picion is correct, the rate of growth of juvenile Moorhens is quite remarkable.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,  
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May 28, 1974.

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### 7. UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR OF *PSITTACULA KRAMERI* *BOREALIS*

Over the past two months I have noticed what I believe to be rather unusual behaviour by the Common Green Parakeet.

We are quite accustomed to seeing these birds in large flocks feeding on the various varieties of *ficus*. We have a large *Ficus bengalensis* on our own compound which, when in fruit, is full of parakeets.

This year they have taken to feeding on *Acacia auriculiformis* stripping first the young shoots, and then the mature phyllodes and bark, leaving the tree completely denuded, and all terminal branches absolutely bare of bark.

We have a number of these trees in the campus and the surprising thing is that instead of large flocks, and they come in their hundreds, descending haphazardly and feeding indiscriminately, these birds behave in an entirely systematic manner and appear to be almost controlled.

From early morning the flocks descend upon a single tree and remain feeding there, in their customary wasteful fashion, until about 0800 IST, when they leave *en masse*. If disturbed they rise and circle to return to the same tree when the cause of their alarm has disappeared.

In two or three days, dependent upon size, the tree will have been stripped to its bare frame and then only do the flocks move on to the next tree, which in many cases may be as little as ten yards away.

In this systematic manner these birds have now denuded a dozen trees, which I am pollarding in an attempt to save them.

I should be interested to learn if this behaviour pattern has been reported elsewhere.

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July 25, 1974.

J. TESSIER-YANDELL